

Remarks

The application is reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed July 15, 2004. Reconsideration of the Office Action is earnestly requested in view of the following Remarks.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. No claims are amended in connection with this response.

In compliance to the Examiner's requirement re the foreign priority document, a certified copy of the priority document is submitted along with this response.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Blanz (DE 19638226C1) or under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hilberer (US Pat. No. 6,540,308).

Without including detailed reasons for the rejection, the Examiner has simply referred to Figures 1-2 of Blanz and Figures 1-3 of Hilberer. In addition, the Examiner has requested a translation of the non-English reference, Blanz, if Applicant can obtain a copy of the translation. In compliance to the Examiner's request, Applicant has enclosed a copy of the translation herewith.

As recited in the independent claims 1, 14, and 17, the present invention as claimed in claims 1-20 particularly requires, among other limitations, that an electronic control unit is designed and arranged to control a pressure control unit, an air dryer, a multi-circuit protection valve, *and* an air suspension system.

According to the specification of the present application, this common electronic control unit fulfills the functions required to process compressed air as well as the functions of supplying and controlling the air suspension system. In this way not only the space required, but also the number of electric and pneumatic connecting lines and conduits is reduced. The spaced apart arrangement known in prior art is abolished, and

it is now possible to arrange the elements of the common electronic control unit at reduced space requirement.

The *Hilberer* document (US 6,540,308 B1) discloses a compressed-air processing system for supplying circuits K1 to K4 with pressured air. An internal CAN 24 is connected to the electronic control unit 25 and is connected by way of a CAN data bus line 26 to the CAN network pertaining to the motor vehicle (column 7, lines 31 to 34).

The electronic control unit 25 interacts:

- with the pressure regulator solenoid valve 2 (column 7, lines 61 to 64), pressure sensors 6b-9b (column 7, line 51),
- data as pressure valves in the service brake circuit and similar data detected by the electronic control system 25 to additional electronic control systems installed in the motor vehicle (column 7, lines 34 to 38),
- the solenoids 6c-9c (column 7, line 54), and
- a solenoid valve 6c (column 6, line 24).

The scope of the control unit is to guarantee that the circuits K1 to K4 are supplied with air at the right pressure and the desired low humidity. The circuits K1 and K2 are used for the compressed-air supply of service brake circuits. A parking brake system is connected to circuit K3, while circuit K4 is provided for the connection of accessories (column 6, lines 8 to 13).

The only disclosure concerning an air suspension system is given in column 9, lines 17 to 37:

“An air suspension marked LF of the truck is also connected to the pressure regulator output hole 22 and can be locked by an electromagnetic overflow valve 4.

The electronic control system 25 can provide, for example, that the overflow valve blocks the compressed-air suspension LF from the supply with compressed air from the pressure regulator output pipe 22 until a pressure sensor 30 arranged therein indicates that a pressure value has been reached which corresponds to a minimum pressure of the supply circuit. ...In this matter, it is ensured that, only after the built up of a minimum pressure in the pressure regulator output hole 22, by which the supply hole 32 and the useful circuits K1-K4 are also supplied, has been concluded, compressed air is used for the air suspension LF. Subsequently, the pressure in the pressure regulator output hole 22 can be further increased."

As such, the disclosure only mentions an interaction of the control unit with the overflow valve 4 in order to regulate the air supply for the air suspension system. According to *Hilberer*, the control unit and the overflow valve 4 do not interact in order to influence the air suspension system itself and work independent on the driving conditions and the load conditions of the vehicle.

Accordingly, in the related Fig. 3 of *Hilberer*, the air suspension system marked with LF is drawn as an independent consumer additionally to the circuits K1-K4. The circuits K1-K4 and the air suspension system LF are drawn outside the box that surrounds both the control unit 25 and the related pneumatic elements indicating the interaction between the control unit and the related elements.

In summary, *Hilberer* does not show more features than the prior art cited in the specification of the present application. However, the document *Hilberer* is another proof for the patentability of the present invention showing that according to the prior art it was common to build up separate control systems for air processing systems and air suspension systems.

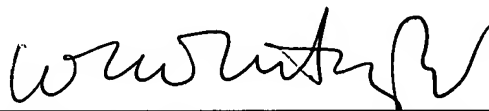
The *Blanz* document (DE 196 38 226 C1) discloses a compressed air processing system for an air supply to reservoirs 27-27'" for vehicle brake systems.

An air suspension system is not mentioned or described at all both in the specification and the figures of *Blanz*. (An air suspension system could maybe be connected to the reservoir 40 but this is not mentioned or shown in *Blanz*. Additionally, any connection of the control unit 18 to an added air suspension system cannot be taken from *Blanz*.)

The cited references per se or in combination do not show the feature that the air processing system and the air suspension system are controlled by a common control unit so that patentability of the present invention should be given.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims currently pending in the application (i.e., claims 1-20) are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and early notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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